

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 OIC-02 /050 W

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P R 151704Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1112

INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN XTUI

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 1316

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG OAS GJ

SUBJECT: GRENADA AS SITE OF NEXT OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. IT SEEMS CLEAR TO EMBASSY THAT DECISION TAKEN AT THE RECENT OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO HOLD 1977 OASGA IN GRENADA WAS MADE WITHOUT ADEQUATE CONSIDERATION OF THE HOST COUNTRY'S ABILITY TO HANDLE SUCH A LARGE GATHERING. PERHAPS IT IS TOO LATE TO REVERSE DECISION, BUT IN OUR VIEW, SERIOUS THOUGHT SHOULD BE GIVEN ALTERNATIVE SITES.

2. OUR CONCERN IS INSPIRED BY THE LOGISTICAL PROBLEMS WE FORESEE. THERE IS, FOR EXAMPLE, NO JET AIRPORT ON THE ISLAND, AND THE SMALL AIRPORT THAT DOES EXIST IS A BUMPY HOUR'S DRIVE FROM THE CAPITAL. ACCORDING TO THE GRENADA TOURIST BOARD, THERE IS A TOTAL OF 456 HOTEL ROOMS (PLUS 500 ROOMS IN GUEST HOUSES AND EFFICIENCY UNITS). TAXIS ARE NOT ONLY LIMITED IN NUMBER (WE ESTIMATE PERHAPS 100) BUT, IN GENERAL, ARE OLD AND MOSTLY IN A POOR STATE OF REPAIR.

3. IF DEPARTMENT DESIRES FURTHER INFORMATION, WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO HAVE A CLOSER LOOK AT THESE PROBLEMS.

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WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW, HOWEVER, APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY

PEOPLE -- DELGATES, MEMBERS OF THE OAS SECRETARIAT, JOURNALISTS, ETC. --MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO ATTEND THE MEETING AND WHAT THEIR ANCIPATED SPACE NEEDS, BOTH LIVING AND WORKING, WOULD BE. FROM THIS CLOSE VANTAGE POINT, GRENADA SEEMS A HIGHLY INAPPROPRIATE PLACE TO HOST A MAJOR INTERNATIONAL MEETING.

4. I HAVE BEEN ADVISED BY AMBASSADOR FURNESS, THE LOCAL ASS REPRESENTATIVE, THAT SECGEN ALEXANDRO ORFILLA WILL BE IN GRENADA EARLY NEXT MONTH, AFTER VISITNG DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ON THE 28TH-29 OF JULY. WHILE THIS INFORMATION IS NOT EXTENSIVE, IT MAY BE ENOUGH TO SUGGEST TO THE SECGEN ET AL THAT A GOOD HARD SECOND LOOK BE TAKEN AT THE OAS DECISION.
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